

Hobbies

'World's Fair of Money' will be no nickel-and-dime affair

By Roger Boye

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Hundreds of dealers selling old coins and paper money.

Sixty-plus hours of educational programming.

Thousands of rarities on display.

Exhibits or live demonstrations by the U.S. Secret Service, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, world mints and others.

Those are some of the ingredients of what could prove to be the largest coin show in U.S. history—the American Numismatic Association's 100th anniversary convention—which begins Tuesday at the Rosemont-O'Hare Exposition Center, 5555 N. River Rd. Perhaps best of all, there's no admission charge to the bourse, programs or displays—they're

free and open to the public.

Organizers expect more than 20,000 people to register over the six days. Here's how to get the most out of your trip to the "World's Fair of Money."

- Plan to spend an entire day. Even if you're new to coin collecting, you'll miss a lot if you try to rush through the bourse or displays. The convention midway alone, with its demonstrations and hands-on exhibits, easily could take a couple of hours to peruse.

(Convention hours are noon to 7 p.m. Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. next Sunday.)

- Be prepared to wear a free name badge. You'll have to register in the North Lobby outside of Exhibit Hall A in the Rosemont

O'Hare Exposition Center. The ANA will give you a name badge, your "ticket" to the bourse room (where dealers sell coins), display arena and special programs. You'll also get a brochure that includes a map and a schedule of convention-related events.

- Bring some spending money. Admission to the convention is free, but you'll have to pay \$6 for a day's worth of parking, which is on the west side of River Road, across from the center. Also, you'll probably find some keepsakes you want to buy in the bourse, where at least 1,300 dealers from around the world will be selling their wares from behind 450 tables.

- Bring a shopping bag (or pick up a free bag at the ANA membership table in Exhibit Hall A). You'll need something for the

many "freebies" you'll get—coin publications, price lists, pamphlets and even some tokens, wooden nickels or medals.

- Wear a good pair of walking shoes. Convention activities cover an area larger than three football fields. To see everything, you could travel a couple of miles.

- Bring your old coins and paper money to the convention for evaluation. The ANA will identify your antique money—free of charge—at an "information and opinions" table in the ANA section of Exhibit Hall A, to the right of the main entrance. (I'll help the ANA staff make those evaluations during part of

the convention.)

- Bring a candy bar or two. You may find it easier (and cheaper) to eat your own snacks than to stand in line at a concession stand.

- Get a first-day-of-issue cancellation of the government's 29-cent "numismatics stamp."

- Don't panic if you need help. ANA staff and volunteers will be available to answer questions, and they will lead guided tours of the convention floor.

And don't despair if you miss the convention—the first such show in the Chicago area since 1966. The ANA plans a return visit for 1999.